

COVID-19

General Information for Expecting or New Parents

Information and guidelines about COVID-19 are continually being reviewed and updated. The messages below may change as our knowledge of COVID-19 evolves. This information is current as of May 7, 2020.

1. Where can I find trusted, up-to-date information on COVID-19?

Visit the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#) and [Interior Health: COVID-19](#) for trusted British Columbia-specific information.

2. I am expecting a baby, or I am a new parent - Is there anything I can do to protect myself and my family from COVID-19?

It is important for expectant parents, new parents, and breastfeeding families to protect themselves and take steps to [prevent infection](#).

There is no vaccine or treatment for COVID-19. The recommended public health measures listed below are the only proven ways we have to reduce the spread. These steps can help to reduce your risk of getting COVID-19 or spreading it to others:

Proper hygiene:

- [Wash your hands](#) often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. Short handwashing videos are available for [adults](#) and [children](#).
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your elbow, not into your hand. Throw your tissues out as soon as possible and wash your hands afterward.
- Avoid touching your eyes, face, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that you touch often (e.g. door handles, phones, television remotes, toilets, bedside tables).

Physical distancing:

- Stay home as much as possible. If you have to leave for errands, try to go out during less busy times. Consider ordering online or having items delivered.
- Limit the number of people you or your baby come into close contact with.
- Keep a distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) from people who don't live with you. This includes when you are outside for walks or exercise, at your workplace, and when you are out for errands, groceries or medical trips.
- Stay away from people who are sick, especially those with cold or flu-like symptoms.

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- Work from home, if you can.
- Avoid social gatherings.
- Stay in virtual contact with family and friends. If you are feeling isolated, reach out.
- Avoid overcrowding in places like elevators. If you can, ride the elevator when it is empty or with only one other person.

Masks:

- If you are a healthy individual, the use of a mask is a personal choice.
- A mask is recommended when feeding a newborn if you have cold or flu-like symptoms or COVID-19. For more information, see [Postpartum and Newborn Care](#).
- Wearing an alternative (i.e. homemade) mask has not been proven to protect the person wearing it. Learn more [here](#).

3. I am finding this to be a really stressful time to have a baby. What are some things I can do and what resources are available to me?

Being pregnant and having a baby can be challenging at the best of times. It may also be more difficult during the COVID-19 pandemic. You are not alone. If you are feeling anxious or overwhelmed, please reach out to your care team. Your care team is here to support you and can help you connect with the resources you need during this time.

Practice good self-care which means:

- Get extra rest, including naps
- Try to maintain a healthy diet
- Be physically active, even at home
- Try your best to make some time for favourite activities you find relaxing even if it is just for a few minutes
- Take breaks from watching or listening to COVID-19 information
- Connect virtually with others in similar situations and talk about how you are feeling

Reach out for [postpartum support](#) or [online mental health supports](#) in B.C. during this time.

4. Where can I find more information about pregnancy, birth, breastfeeding, postpartum supports, and caring for my new baby?

- Visit [Interior Health “Having a Baby”](#)

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- All pregnant women are encouraged to sign up for the Healthy from the Start Program. Once you sign up, you can speak with a public health nurse, receive prenatal information, ask questions, and get connected to resources in your community. [Sign up](#) with a confidential e-form or call the toll free number at 1-855-868-7710 as early in your pregnancy as possible.
- To prevent the spread of COVID-19, in-person prenatal classes are suspended. Prenatal information is available through a free text messaging prenatal education program called SmartMom. Sign up anytime in your pregnancy by visiting [SmartMomCanada](#) or by texting “**Interior**” to **12323**.

For more information on pregnancy, breastfeeding, and the early years visit:

[HealthLinkBC](#)

[Baby's Best Chance](#)

[Healthy Families BC](#)

COVID-19 and Pregnancy (prenatal)

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1. I am pregnant and I am worried about COVID-19. How will COVID-19 affect my baby and me?

- There is currently no evidence to suggest that being pregnant increases your risk of getting COVID-19. People who are pregnant are believed to have the same risk of getting COVID-19 as other adults.
- There is currently no evidence that COVID-19 is transmitted to your baby during pregnancy, delivery or through breastmilk. However, your baby can catch COVID-19 in any environment after birth in the same way you can.
- There is currently no evidence to suggest that a pregnant person is at any greater risk for serious health concerns from COVID-19 than other adults. However, with any significant illness during pregnancy, there is always an increased risk of preterm or stillbirth.
- Talk to your health care provider or call 8-1-1 if you have questions about COVID-19 symptoms or testing or test results.

2. I think I have COVID-19, what should I do?

- If you think you might have symptoms of COVID-19, use the [BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) and **call your health-care provider.**
- Your health-care provider will discuss your concerns and may need to ask additional questions about your health and pregnancy.
- Different arrangements for your clinic appointments and prenatal care may be needed.
- If you need to be tested for COVID-19 call your local [Interior Health testing centre](#) for an appointment. **Drop-ins are not permitted.**
- If you have a test done, please inform your doctor or midwife providing your prenatal care.

3. I'm pregnant and feeling healthy but I am worried about catching COVID-19. Should I still go to my prenatal appointments?

- **Talk to your doctor or midwife about your upcoming prenatal appointments** and let them know you are worried about leaving your home to attend an appointment.
- Regular prenatal care is important for the health of you and your baby.
- Clinics and offices are taking extra care to reduce risks of COVID-19, and many are using different ways to connect with patients during this time.